

Message Text

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PAGE 01 ISLAMA 04190 271302Z
ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 EA-07 ISO-00 NEAE-00 SSO-00 INRE-00
NSCE-00 PM-04 NSC-05 SP-02 SS-15 DODE-00 CIAE-00
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O R 271137Z APR 77
FM AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 1205
INFO AMEMBASSY DACCA
AMEMBASSY KABUL
AMCONSUL KARACHI
AMCONSUL LAHORE
AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI
AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMEMBASSY TEHRAN
CINCPAC
AMEMBASSY MANILA

C O N F I D E N T I A L ISLAMABAD 4190

CINCPAC FOR POLAD
MANILA FOR AMBASSADOR BYROADE

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PK, PINT
SUBJECT: SITUATION IN PAKISTAN

REF: ISLAMABAD 4139

1. IN APPARENT CONFIRMATION OF NAWA-I-WAQT REPORT REFTEL,
SEVERAL PAPERS HERE CONFIRM THAT TOP PNA LEADERSHIP IS
ASSEMBLED AT SIHALA POLICE ACADEMY REST HOUSE NEAR RAWALPINDI.
APRIL 27 PAKISTAN TIMES NAMES MUFTI MAHMOOD, NAWABZADA
NASRULLAH KHAN, MAULANA SHAH AHMED NOORANI, SHERBAZ MAZARI,
MIAN TUFAIL MOHAMMAD, GHAFOOR AHMED, MALIK MOHAMMAD QASIM AND
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PAGE 02 ISLAMA 04190 271302Z

BEGUM NASIM WALI KHAN AS HAVING BEEN SHIFTED FROM OTHER
DETENTION CENTERS TO SIHALA. ACTING PNA PRESIDENT
PIR OF PAGARO HAS REPORTEDLY DEPARTED FROM LAHORE
TO TAKE PART WITH OPPOSITION LEADERS IN A DISCUSSION AND
EVALUATION OF PRIME MINISTER BHUTTO'S LATEST PROPOSALS
TO THE PNA LEADERSHIP. PNA LEADER AIR MARSHAL (RETD) ASGHAR
KHAN, WHO HAS REMAINED UNDER DETENTION AT KOT LAKHPAT JAIL

IN LAHORE, REPORTEDLY IS ON HIS WAY TO SIHALA TO JOIN THE OTHERS AFTER REPORTED ATTEMPTS BY PIR OF PAGARO AND A TELEPHONE CALL FROM MAULANA MUFTI MAHMOOD LATE NIGHT OF APRIL 26, TO PERSUADE HIM TO PARTICIPATE. NO RELIABLE INFORMATION IS AVAILABLE REGARDING WHO FROM THE PPP SIDE HAS BEEN IN TOUCH WITH THE OPPOSITION LEADERS, WHAT THE CONTENTS OF THE PROPOSALS NOW UNDER CONSIDERATION ARE, OR WHAT -- IF ANY -- REACTION OPPOSITION LEADERS HAVE SO FAR HAD TO THE PROPOSALS.

2. ON APRIL 25 PNA LAWYERS FILED AN APPLICATION IN LAHORE HIGH COURT FOR RELEASE OF PNA LEADERS JAILED UNDER MARTIAL LAW CRACKDOWN, ON GROUNDS MARTIAL LAW IS UNCONSTITUTIONAL. FORMER LAHORE HIGH COURT CHIEF JUSTICE SARDAR IQBAL WAS REPORTEDLY CHIEFLY RESPONSIBLE FOR DRAFTING THE BRIEF. FOLLOWING DAY THE HIGH COURT TURNED DOWN THE APPLICATION. PNA IS EXPECTED TO APPEAL TO THE SUPREME COURT. MEANWHILE, PNA HAS LODGED NUMEROUS CASES AGAINST ACTIVITIES AND REGULATIONS TAKING PLACE UNDER MARTIAL LAW. RUMORS ALSO CIRCULATE THAT THE PNA HAS REQUESTED A LAHORE COURT TO REGISTER A MURDER CASE AGAINST THE SOLDIER RESPONSIBLE FOR THE SHOOTING OF A SCOOTERIST IN THAT CITY APRIL 23.

3. THE SITUATION THROUGHOUT THE COUNTRY APPEARS TO BE GENERALLY CALM, THOUGH PRESS CENSORSHIP MAKES ANY ACCURATE ASSESSMENT DIFFICULT. APRIL 27 PRESS CARRIED REPORTS OF CONTINUED PPP PROCESSIONS IN SUPPORT OF THE PRIME MINISTER. ANTI-AMERICAN SLOGANS WERE AGAIN RAISED BY PROCESSIONISTS IN PINDI. PREPARATIONS REPORTEDLY CONTINUE FOR THE

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PAGE 03 ISLAMA 04190 271302Z

DEMONSTRATION PNA LEADERS HAVE CALLED FOR ON APRIL 30 IN FRONT OF THE PRIME MINISTER'S HOUSE, RAWALPINDI. APRIL 27 PRESS REPORTS TELL OF PLANS TO CONVENE THREE CONVENTIONS IN THE CAPITAL AREA ON APRIL 29: SEPARATE NATIONAL CONVENTIONS OF LAWYERS AND ULEMA HAVE BEEN CALLED FOR IN RAWALPINDI AND LIAQUAT BALUCH, CHAIRMAN OF THE PUNJAB STUDENTS COUNCIL (JAMAAT-I-ISLAMI SYMPATHIZERS) HAS CALLED FOR A NATIONAL CONVENTION OF STUDENT REPRESENTATIVES IN ISLAMABAD. A CANADIAN TRAVELER HAS INFORMED US OF SIGHTING A GROUP OF PATHANS ON THE GRAND TRUNK ROAD NEAR THE ATTOCK BRIDGE, MARCHING TOWARD RAWALPINDI, PRESUMABLY TO PARTICIPATE IN THE ANTI-BHUTTO DEMONSTRATIONS.

4. IN CONTRAST TO THESE POLITICAL ACTIVITIES, THE NATION'S PARLIAMENT HAS RECONVENED IN A SHOW OF ROUTINE NORMALCY. NEWLY-ELECTED MEMBERS OF THE SENATE WERE SWORN IN APRIL 26 AND INCLUDE GENERAL (RETD.) TIKKA KHAN, BALUCHISTAN EX-MINISTER SAIFULLAH KHAN PARACHA, AND FORMER NATIONAL ASSEMBLY SPEAKER FARROQ ALI KHAN. (AIRGRAM FOLLOWS ON NEWCOMERS TO SENATE.)

TIKKA'S ELECTION TO THE SENATE APPEARS PART OF A PLAN, LONG
DISCUSSED BY POLITICAL OBSERVERS, TO BRING HIM INTO THE
FEDERAL CABINET EITHER AS MINISTER OF HOME AFFAIRS OR MINISTER
OF DEFENSE. CONTRARY TO EARLIER REPORTS NOOR HAYAT KHAN
NOON IS STILL IN THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY AND HAS NOT RESIGNED
FROM THE FEDERAL CABINET. HE TOOK AN ACTIVE PART IN THE
NOMINATION AND ELECTION OF SENATORS IN THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY.
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